



7579 A bronze usubata (thin rim) flower vessel, the handles in the form of two stylised elephant heads  
Japan 18th century Edo period

Dimensions: H. 32cm x Diam. 26cm (12¾" x 10¼")

The classical form of usubata (thin rim) with a broad flat rim often edged with an upturning lip is a Japanese design, although the main part of its body echoes Chinese vessels. Usubata have been in use since the 16th century and favoured by Senkō II, a renowned master of Ikenobo, the oldest school of ikebana (flower arrangement).

Throughout the ages the form of usubata evolved together with changing tastes and trends in the flower arranging art. From the mid Edo period the mouth of the vessel was often splayed rather than horizontal and could be filled with water. In the early 19th century this type of usubata was popularised by Murata Seimin (1761-1837) and his Edo based school.

For vessels of similar style see: Flower bronzes of Japan, Joe Earle, 1995, pp. 96-103